

Bangor University
Doctoral School Board (DSB)
Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2018

Present: Doctoral School

Professor John Turner [JT] (PGR Dean, Chair), Dr Penny Dowdney [PD], Aashu Jayadeep (Secretary)

College Directors

Dr James McDonald [JM] (CNS), Dr Helena Miguelez-Carballeira [HM-C] (CAH)

Heads of DTPs/DTCs and other centres

Professor John Healey [JH]

School Directors

Dr Gwion Williams (BBS), Dr Stefan Machura [SM] (Social Sciences), Dr Wei Shi (Law), Pwyll Ap Sion (Music), Dr Steffan Thomas (Creative Studies & Media), Mr Joshua Andrews (Philosophy & Religious Studies)

Dr Nathalie Fenner (Biological Sciences), Dr Neal Hockley [NH] (SENERGY),

Dr William J Teahan [WT] (Computer Science)

Dr Jane Wakeman (Medical Sciences), Dr Sion Williams [SW] (Healthcare Sciences)

PGR Administrators

Beverley James, Christine Parry, Gwenda Pritchard, Iwan Davies

Students' Union Representatives

Helen Marchant

PGR Student Reps

Luke Stephen Hillary [LH] (Biological Sciences), Richard Dallison (SENERGY), Eluned Hudson (Chemistry)

Apologies:

Dr Martina Lahmann, Prof Robert Rogers, Dr Jean Ware, Dr Raluca Radulescu, Prof Gerwyn Williams, Prof Huw Pryce, Dr Lucy Huskinson, Prof Paul Spencer, Everil McQuarie, Caroline Randall, Julie Boulton, Gillian Griffith, Laurence Jones, Tanya Herring, Elizabeth Woodcock, Megan Baker, Andrew Van Der Schatte Olivier, Bethanie Francis, Helen Ford, Clare Margaret Brewster, Heli Gittins, Sophie Harrison

ACTION

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Board members introduced themselves and the Chair welcomed members to the sixth meeting of the Doctoral School Board.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS/ACTIONS

1. With reference to Minute 7.5, 4 & 5 (**KESS2 Feedback**), the chair informed that the Task group is constituted and PD will update the Board about the progress.
2. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February were confirmed as a correct record.

3. KEY INFORMATION ON:

a) PRES opening 27th April

1. The Chair informed that the annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) will open for research candidates from April 27 – May 18. The Doctoral School will be sending out emails about the survey to all PGR leads. Separate automatic emails with

the survey links will be sent out to PGR candidates to participate in the survey. The Chair remarked that the survey is an excellent tool allowing us to benchmark across the sector and gain insight from postgraduate researchers about their learning and supervision experience.

2. Two new questions in the Personal Outlook section is the only change that is expected this year. These ask for the top 3 best aspects and areas requiring improvement.
3. PGR leads and PGR representatives are expected to encourage participation from candidates, especially the researchers who are off campus, as the PRES is a measure to acknowledge and improve all PGR related activities. Every PGR candidate should be made aware of the wide range of facilities and events happening in the research community, and should be aware of all processes (eg. Progress Reviews) and support provided (eg. Personal Tutors and PGR Leads) ahead of completing PRES.

**PGR Leads/
PGR Reps**

4. The Doctoral School will be monitoring participation rates and will be sending interim reminders to encourage maximum participation.
5. PD informed that PRES posters are available (collect at end of the meeting) to be displayed in individual Schools in order to raise awareness.
6. JM enquired about the format of results of the survey. The Chair informed that reports will be provided electronically by July (and the detail of these depends on response rate to preserve anonymity) and the DSB will arrange meetings similar to previous year to discuss and arrive at Action plans to improve. LH commented that PGR candidates would participate more if information regarding the survey was displayed during start of seminar sessions or other PGR events.

b) INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW : week beginning 21st May 2018

1. The Chair informed the Board that the Institutional Review by QAA will begin the week of 21st May. The panel visited 23rd April to initiate the Review, indicate the procedures, and identify the people they intend to meet.
2. A Self-Evaluation document (as circulated) highlights how PGR has evolved since the previous QA review in 2012. BU has performed well in the previous reviews and it is important that we show robust mechanisms and display parity across the University. It is important that all those involved in PGR are aware of this document as well as the mapping document (also circulated), which indicates how we have responded since the last review and what processes are now in place. Anyone identified for panel sessions will be invited to training events during the week beginning 7th May.

c) PGRS & Review Meetings (May-June)

1. JT reminded the Board that the PGR Review Meetings should ideally happen between May-June or at the least be completed by September in case of an unsatisfactory first meeting, so that the Doctoral School can report the progress by October.
2. It is important that the PGR candidates have these face-to face meetings with the Supervisor, independent Internal staff member, and independent Chairperson (these being independent of the Supervisory team). These meetings are

opportunities for PGR candidates to demonstrate progress in their research and personal development, and serve a training for the final viva. JH & NH commented that the Chairperson is not necessarily a subject specialist and is responsible for conducting a fair process.

3. The PGRS system will collate the evidence of this meeting and Chair and Internal staff will have the opportunity to see the reports. It is important that the candidates and the supervisor get the opportunity to report independently. The online PGRS has improved from the first version based on the feedback received and the new version is expected to be available from May.
4. The new PGRS is simplified with three steps to complete the data capture. Some changes expected are:
 - a. Either Supervisors or Co-Supervisors can now complete the Supervisor report
 - b. Internal staff or Chair can now complete the report of the Review Meeting
 - c. Fewer emails will be sent out as reminders to organise meetings
 - d. No preliminary Chair Report
 - e. Additional outcome included of Unsatisfactory – further Review Committee required in three months
 - f. More intuitive formatting and clearer rubric
5. The new PGR Regulations outline clearly the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the PGRS monitoring.
6. SM commented that the new version needs to be reviewed thoroughly and it would be helpful to have the contact details of the IT personnel. JT advised that the PGRS will be supported by the IT Helpdesk. JT informed that IT is in the process of preparing guidance/ Panopto material.
7. The Doctoral School will be informing the PGR leads about the version update. PGR leads can disseminate this information and inform the PGR candidates and Academic staff about the Review Committees

**Doctoral
School/
PGR
Leads**

d) PGR Regulations 03- key changes

1. The Chair informed the group that the new PGR Regulation 03 reflects the expected current practice across the PGR community. The Regulations (currently in draft form on the Doctoral School website and previously circulated) will be presented to Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee on May 15th for final approval. They will then be made available on the Academic Registry Regulations web site.
2. The main changes are in processes and methods. They cover:
 - Scope
 - Criteria for awards
 - Method of study and admission
 - Postgraduate management, supervision and training
 - Monitoring and review of progress
 - Submission of thesis and examination
 - Terms
 - Appendix 1 submitting a thesis
 - Appendix 2 guidelines for viva voce
3. The main areas of change are included in the minutes of the DSB meeting held on 1st Feb 2018 (4.2).

e) PURE PhD profiles and publications.

JT reiterated the importance of academic staff updating their profiles in PURE to highlight their relevant research interests and areas of research degree supervision. It is equally important that PGR candidates create their own profile in PURE highlighting their research. It is necessary for PGR to give their permission for these details to be displayed on School websites. JT remarked that further discussions are underway to identify research papers produced by PGR in PURE.

4. DISCUSSION ON PGR CURRENT MATTERS: INC. PGR APPLICATIONS

1. JT brought the Board's attention to the discussion document on admissions procedures prepared by NH (as circulated) to streamline the PGR application process.
2. The Board discussed that the number of speculative applications (i.e. ones with little prospect of getting an offer or funding) could be reduced if the system did not allow applications to be submitted unless they meet certain criteria such as funding requirements and the candidate has proposed a supervisor. JH commented that it would be ideal if they can suggest more than one potential supervisor.
3. It was suggested that we should provide very clear guidance to PGR applicants on plagiarism (and the need to avoid it in proposals), and state clearly that all proposals will be subject to plagiarism checking. Candidates should have to tick a declaration that they have read the guidance and that their proposal does not contain plagiarism.
4. Removing the requirement for a personal statement, which duplicates information from the CV would also reduce the complexity of the application process.
5. PGR reps also supported the suggested modifications and pointed out that removing duplicate detail for Bangor students continuing, as PGRs would make the application process much easier from the applicant's perspective. Students who are already accepted should be directed to a much simpler form than the full detail one used currently.
6. JT agreed to continue the discussions with Admissions office to see whether modifications could be implemented, but was aware that there are compliance issues that Admissions have to ensure are met, which is why certain information is required.

5. BRIEF REPORTS

5.1 College DoGS : Updates

1. HM-C reported that CAH is successfully running the PhD fee waiver scheme supported by the Finance office for the third consecutive year.
2. JM reported the following from CNS:
 - Implementing last year's PRES action plan in preparation for next PRES.
 - Preparation for PGR review process.
 - Task and end group to look at KESS2; meeting at the end of this session.
 - A Great Heritage Scholarship has been awarded to Charlotte Griffiths who will work with Richard Holland in SBS
3. SW reported the following from Healthcare Sciences:

- Within COHABS the College Director of Research Post-Graduate Studies role has been submitted for applications (closing 25th May).
- The School of HealthCare Sciences (HCS) have developed and submitted for validation with two new Professional Doctorates to augment the current Doctor in Healthcare (DHealthCare) focused on Implementation. These are as follows:
 - Doctorate in Healthcare in Ageing and Dementia Studies (DHealthCare Ageing and Dementia Studies)

Exit Awards:

 - PG Cert in Ageing and Dementia Studies
 - PG Dip in Ageing and Dementia Studies
 - MSc in Ageing and Dementia Resilience
 - Doctorate in Healthcare in Public Health (DHealthCare Public Health)

Exit Awards:

 - PG Cert in Public Health
 - PG Dip in Public Health
 - MSc in Public Health
- In addition the transition arrangements between HCS and Social Sciences have been agreed with the PGR programme 'Health and Social Care' Award transferred in August 1st. A number of students and supervisors are transferring across to HCS and joint reviews will be completed for those researchers as part of transition arrangements.

JT mentioned that there are changes expected in PGR representation and organisation for August 1st when the new College Structures will be implemented.

5.2 Student representatives : updates

No updates

5.3 PGR Admin staff: Updates

No updates.

JT requested the staff to share the PGR records maintained as spreadsheet files with the Doctoral School. It would be useful to maintain a database of the actual PhD title of each PGR across Schools.

**PGR
Admin**

5.4 SU: updates

No updates

5.5 DTPs/DTCs : updates

1. PD reported to the Board that Bangor would be hosting the Summer ENVISION conference this year again in the Marine Centre Wales, School of Ocean Sciences.
2. The 2 EPSRC outline bids (Future Timber and AI Computing) are waiting for outcomes with a delay of six weeks.
3. Thirty scholarships were approved for the ESRC Wales DTP. The top scoring 35 projects out of 50 were awarded and the feedback was that the quality was higher than last year. It is expected that the outcome for Bangor will be 3-5 studentships.

JT pointed out that it is important that the schools look at possible programmes and collaborations for further DTPs and CTDs in the future to support PGR recruitment because most funding is for such programmes.

5.6 Doctoral School : updates

Dr Penny Dowdney gave the Board an update on the work and developments within the Doctoral School:

1. **Evaluation** – The Doctoral School conducted the first semester (Sept 2017 to Jan 2018) evaluation of the PGR training and development programme. A survey was sent out to 239 PGR candidates and 16 staff registered for the 27 workshops during that period. The response rate was 18 % with largely positive feedback. Some of the areas where input was sought included management of the workshops, overall opinion about the workshops and comments to improve the process.
PGR reps commented that it would be easier to participate if entering the dates when workshops took place was not a mandatory field in the survey.
PD commented that Doctoral School would be incorporating that change, as survey feedback is important to improve the PGR training and also to evaluate and understand any new requirements.
2. **Internship** - The Doctoral School will be providing an internship opportunity again for undergraduate students and will be interviewing interns in the coming month for summer placement.
3. **Planning** - Training and development programme planning for the next academic year will commence soon and schools are welcome to provide suggestions on workshops, which could be integrated with the Doctoral School. The training and development provision for doctoral supervisors will be reviewed, supported by HR, with a view to expanding what we offer.
4. JT mentioned that any suggestions for the Doctoral School training programme are welcome.
5. Doctoral School will be scheduling school visits to discuss strategies on improving recruitment.

6. CNS KESS 2 Survey

PD briefed the Board about the survey conducted to investigate the feedback on KESS 2 application process for CNS (DSB meeting 1st Feb 2018 minutes 7.5 4 & 5).

1. The survey was useful in gathering details and KESS 2 team will be addressing the issues related to processes.
2. One of the issues pointed out was delays in starting projects. KESS 2, being a three-partnership program, has a lot of complexity in putting company contracts in place. Discussions are ongoing to streamline the process and provide reassurance to potential participants by improving communications.
3. Issues had been raised regarding submission of timesheets – this will be difficult to change, as it is a condition of the KESS 2 funding for participants.
4. Issues raised regarding procurement process is not just for KESS 2 but it is a general University wide process that has to be followed.

5. There were also suggestions regarding a maternity/ paternity / adoption policy, which was already under discussion, and the policy is currently being drafted and will be consulted on.
6. Issues regarding printing are under discussion with JM. Any internal transfer is not eligible for KESS 2 and individual schools or colleges usually address this.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Doctoral School Board will be held on September 27th at 10.00 am, in the Council Chamber.